

I. Specifying the Competition

Prior to the competition, the Committee must establish:

Entry requirements

Entry deadline.

Eligibility (e.g. age limit, Handicap Index limit, whether players must be amateurs or professionals etc.) Entry procedure (certain competitions may require a formal entry application, for others, a sign-up sheet in the clubhouse is sufficient).

Form of play and flights

The Committee must specify the form of play (i.e. individual Stroke Play, Four-Ball Stroke Play, Four-Ball Match Play, Foursomes, Stableford, etc.). Additionally, if the form of play is one not covered by the Rules of Golf, e.g. a best-ball-of-four, or 'scramble,' the Committee must establish, in advance, any special conditions which apply.

The method of settling ties must be specified - see Rules of Golf Appendix I; Part C ; Section 11 for the USGA recommendation on this matter.

In a flighted competition, each flight is considered to be a separate competition.

Schedule

Number of rounds to be played.

Dates of stipulated rounds.

Rain dates (if applicable).

In a match play competition in which the players are responsible for establishing the date and time of their match it is recommended that a time of starting be set for the match and the players be permitted to play the match ahead of schedule. A time of starting set by the player has the same status as one set by the Committee - see Decision 33-3/1.

The Committee may allow players in stroke play to set their own times of starting as well - see Decision 33-3/3.

Handicapping Issues, if applicable

Section 9-2 of the USGA Handicap System Manual discusses which Handicap Index should be used

Section 9-3 of the USGA Handicap System Manual discusses the assignment of strokes and includes the adjustments for players competing from different sets of tees or men and women competing from the same sets of tees.

10. How to Decide Ties

In both match play and stroke play, a tie can be an acceptable result. However, when it is desired to have a sole winner, the Committee has the authority, under Rule 33-6, to determine how and when a tie is decided. The decision should be published in advance.

The USGA recommends:

“Match Play

A match that ends all square should be played off hole by hole until one side wins a hole. The play-off should start on the hole where the match began. In a handicap match, handicap strokes should be allowed as in the stipulated round.

Stroke Play

(a) In the event of a tie in a scratch stroke-play competition, a play-off is recommended. The play-off may be over 18 holes or a smaller number of holes as specified by the Committee. If that is not feasible or there is still a tie, a hole-by-hole play-off is recommended.

(b) In the event of a tie in a handicap stroke-play competition, a play-off with handicaps is recommended. The play-off may be over 18 holes or a smaller number of holes as specified by the Committee. It is recommended that any such play-off consist of at least three holes.

In competitions where the handicap stroke allocation table is not relevant, if the play-off is less than 18 holes, the percentage of 18 holes played should be applied to the players' handicaps to determine their play-off handicaps. Handicap stroke fractions of one half stroke or more should count as a full stroke and any lesser fraction should be disregarded.

In competitions where the handicap stroke table is relevant, such as four-ball stroke play and bogey, par and Stableford competitions, handicap strokes should be taken as they were assigned for the competition using the players' respective stroke allocation table(s).

(c) If a play-off of any type is not feasible, matching score cards is recommended. The method of matching cards should be announced in advance and should also provide what will happen if this procedure does not produce a winner.

An acceptable method of matching cards is to determine the winner on the basis of the best score for the last nine holes. If the tying players have the same score for the last nine, determine the winner on the basis of the last six holes, last three holes and finally the 18th hole. If this method is used in a competition with a multiple tee start, it is recommended that the "last nine holes, last six holes, etc." is considered to be holes 10-18, 13-18, etc

For competitions where the handicap stroke table is not relevant, such as individual stroke play, if the last nine, last six, last three holes scenario is used, one-half, one-third, one-sixth, etc. of the handicaps should be deducted from the score for those holes.

In terms of the use of fractions in such deductions, the Committee should act in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant handicapping authority. In competitions where the handicap stroke table is relevant, such as four-ball stroke play and bogey, par and Stableford competitions, handicap strokes should be taken as they were assigned for the competition, using the players' respective stroke allocation table(s).